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IN THE NEW SOUTH.

The Foundry, Machine, and Engineering Departments of Tuskegee in the Hands of a Practical Afro-American—A Review of the Work of Mr. H. E. Thomas, a Product of the Great Iron Works of the Middle West.

The people who read in newspapers and magazines of Tuskegee and of its matchless leader, Prof. Booker T. Washington, know but little of the workings of that great school. Many books have been published concerning this institution and nearly a dozen books and pamphlets have been published on the life and works of Mr. Washington, but, there is still a side to the institution and to the man that is unknown to the public. A history of any one of the many departments of this school would be interesting. The writer proposes to dwell on the Foundry, Machine and Engineering Departments of Tuskegee and of the young and talented Afro-American who has charge of this work. Mr. Washington's great success is due not so much to his oratory, nor to his great power to attract people to him but to the fact that in the development of Tuskegee, he has secured the country looking for the best talent—men and women—put in charge of the various branches and departments of the work. What is true of the Engineering department of Tuskegee is true of each department of this school.

The subject of this sketch is Mr. H. E. Thomas who is in charge of this work. He has been thoroughly trained and educated along mechanical lines and has been employed by more important machine building companies in the northern states, than perhaps any other colored man in the country. He was formerly with the Whitely Reaper Works, of Springfield, Ohio, as a machinist, experimenting with the knot tying attachments for self binding portion of that company's exhibit of knotting mechanism for the World's Fair in 1893. For three years he was employed by the Chase Machine Co. as a workman on instruments, special machines and universal grinder work; while with this company he made a series of experiments on the machinery and use of brass balls, for joints on high speed machinery, and has compiled much data on this subject. He was the leading machinist in the construction of the two huge grinding mills of the Armour Packing Works of Chicago which have the capacity of grinding forty tons of beef skulls per day.

During the summer of 1899, Mr. Thomas was engaged as a machinist for the Remont and Miles Works of Philadelphia during the construction of two large gun lathes for turning guns for battleships. Several years ago he took part in a discussion in a mechanical journal on the subject

"FAST DRILLING OF TOOL STEEL"

He has written articles for several mechanical journals, on technical sub-

jects, which were well received by mechanics throughout the country. One of the articles was for the American Machinist describing an original idea for floating engine and boiler room, in a gorgeous procession of floats at Tuskegee in honor of the visit of President McKinley to that place.

Mr. Thomas is an authority on metals and the treatment of metals for modern machine construction; he has also for years made a thorough study of the mathematical and theoretical princi-

ples used in machine and engineering work. He instituted the machine and engineering works at Tuskegee Institute, and has been the head instructor of that department for six years. The course of study in the machine and engineering works at Tuskegee has been formulated by Mr. Thomas to meet modern requirements; and the present high standard of metal work at this school is due to his efforts.

His progressive system of instruction with the students in the engineering

departments has enabled him to manage the steam plant containing eight steam boilers and seven steam engines, with student engineers, with both day and night duty; also all the repairs and adjustment of mechanism at the extensive shops and laboratories of Tuskegee is done by student machinists. Thus, indeed is an exacting system rarely accomplished in school work.

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